

BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

MEMBER OF CONGRESS
3RD DISTRICT, MISSOURI

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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SMALL BUSINESS
RANKING MEMBER

August 5, 2021

The Honorable Mike Parson
Governor of Missouri
State Capitol Building
201 W. Capitol Avenue, Room 216
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Parson,

On July 19, 2021, Ben & Jerry's, which is a subsidiary of Unilever, announced that their company will no longer be servicing locations in the West Bank, East of Jerusalem. Due to this politically motivated action that specifically targets the nation of Israel, Ben and Jerry's is openly participating in the boycott, divest, and sanction (BDS) movement which accuses our greatest ally in the Middle East of apartheid and calls for its economic destruction. This is one of the latest examples of "woke capitalism" that attacks the viability of companies, or in this case the strongest democracy in the region, to satisfy the desires of ideological extremists.

The BDS movement originated in 2005 and calls for a boycott of "Israeli sporting, cultural, and academic institutions" and according to a December 2020 Times article supports "banning businesses...ending military trade and free-trade agreements, as well as suspending Israel's membership in international forums such as UN bodies and FIFA." Even more concerning is Unilever, the parent company of Ben and Jerry's, has continuously conducted business in numerous countries that are placed on the Human Rights Watch list, including: China, Angola, Sudan, Zambia, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Honduras, Iran, Syria, and Yemen.

Unilever, through Ben & Jerry's, is choosing to play political games with their corporation in order to appease anti-Israel activist groups. In fact, BDS spokeswoman and Government Relations Coordinator for the American Muslims for Palestine organization, Neveen Ayesh, who testified before the Missouri legislature on February 14, 2018 in favor of BDS, publicly stated, "I want to set Israel on fire with my own hands & watch it burn to ashes along with every Israeli in it. Call it what you want to call it idc" and "Once again I want to personally set Israel & all the Israelis in it on fire & watch them burn to ashes" and "I tried befriending a Jew once. Worst idea ever. I now know why there will never be peace in the Middle East". Sentiments like these are consumed with hate, fueled by racism, and now legitimized by Unilever and Ben & Jerry's.

Under your leadership in July of 2020, Missouri joined a number of states in opposition to BDS. With the passage of the *Anti-Discrimination Against Israel Act* the people of Missouri made it clear that any company that takes part in the BDS movement may not contract with our state government. We appreciate your public statements opposing Ben and Jerry's decision and

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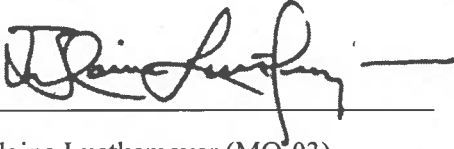
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the investigation you ordered your staff and state officials to undertake with respect to the new law. We stand ready to work with you to uphold the values of Missouri and ensure those values are reflected in the way our state conducts its business.

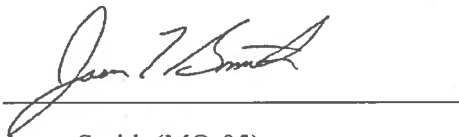
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blaine Luetkemeyer", written over a horizontal line.

Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-03)
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vicky Hartzler", written over a horizontal line.

Vicky Hartzler (MO-04)
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Jason Smith (MO-05)
Member of Congress